(b) if so, the estimates of kharif production in the country;

(c) the areas of North India that have been affected due to poor monsoon; and

(d) what has been done by Government to augment timely supply of rabi inputs to poor farmers, particularly farmers of Bundelkhand region in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) The poor monsoon in the Kharif season has impacted Kharif sown area and also production. As per the 1st advance Estimates released on 3rd November, 2009, production of Kharif foodgrains in the country is estimated at 96.63 million tonnes as compared to 117.70 million tonnes during 2008-09. The production of Kharif oilseeds is also lower at 15.23 million tonnes against 17.88 million tonnes last year.

(c) Major States in North India which experienced deficient monsoon include Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and also Bihar.

(d) With a view to augment timely supply of rabi inputs to farmers, National Conference on Rabi Campaign 2009-10 was organized wherein States specific problems on availability of fertilizers, seeds etc. were addressed. Early rabi planning for capitalizing the soil moisture of late rains (September end to 1st week of October) was facilitated by the Ministry of extending expert support to States. Planning for additional areas under Boro/summer rice, wheat, pulses and coarse cereals for increased production in rabi is finalized. Measures for tie-up for input supply, advance financial allocation and releases to the States for timely completion of Rabi operation are ensured through conferences and interactions with the States including Uttar Pradesh.

Private sector participation in agriculture sector

†160. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is contemplating to formulate a policy on private sector's participation in the infrastructure segment of the agriculture sector particularly for integrating production and marketing related activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the extent to which it would help small and marginal farmers of the country in achieving better price for their produce?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) There is no proposal for formulating a specific policy on private sector's participation in the infrastructure segment of the agriculture sector. However, the National Policy for Farmers announced in 2007 envisages private sector participation in the following:-

(i) Inclusion of private sector Research & Development (R&D) institutions under the; umbrella of National Agricultural Research System.

(ii) Development of terminal markets for agriculture in public-private partnership mode to provide better market access to farmers with better price realization in a transparent trading environment with suitable backward and forward linkages.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(iii) Biotechnology research in the area of vaccine development would be stepped up, encouraging public private partnerships.

(iv) Inclusion of private initiatives in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for inclusive and broad based development.

(v) Involving competent private institutions to provide vocational training to the youth.

(vi) Reforms initiative in agricultural marketing taken by Ministry of Agriculture for amending present State Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act (APMC Act) on the lines of Model Act which provides avenues to the private sector for direct marketing, contract farming and setting up of markets in private and cooperative sectors.

(c) The above initiatives taken by the Government facilitate integration of production with marketing through better post-harvest infrastructure and management practices for the farmers. The reforms also facilitate in direct marketing and contract farming with the objective of enhancing the farmer's income. The reforms also bring in rationalization of market fees, dissemination of market information at the right time and better market-led-extension etc. These would help the farmers in the country in achieving better price of their produce.

Compensation to farmers for loss of their crops

†161. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has made available funds to the State Governments specially Uttar Pradesh to compensate small and marginal farmers for loss of their crops due to rain, drought and flood during the year 2009-10;

(b) if so, to what extent and level the funds have been disbursed to different States, specially Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether Government has carried out the assessment of the losses of crops in each State;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the other remedial steps being taken by Government for compensation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (e) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments concerned to take necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities. The Government of India supplements the efforts of the States with financial and logistic support. There is ready availability of funds with the States under the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) to take immediate necessary measures including relief to the farmers for crop loss of 50% and above as per norms. The Government of India and State Governments concerned contribute to CRF in the ratio of 3:1. If additional assistance over and above CRF is required to deal with natural calamities of severe nature, the same is considered from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) in accordance with an established procedure of submission of Memorandum for assistance from NCCF by the State Government.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi